1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

crops have been adopted, besides vegetables and clover (berseem). During the last five years, persons who had sufficient land have started to grow sugar-cane and cotton with these two crops. This widened cropping has been due to the need for more cash crops, and to the increase in transport facilities for selling sugar-cane and cotton. On the whole, however, the village produces mainly subsistence crops, which form the basis of the villagers' bread intake.

The agricultural activities in the village are regulated by the time-honoured Ancient Egyptian calendar which is now known as the Coptic Calendar, and this co-exists with the two other calendars, the Moslem (Hijri) and the European (Miladi).[1] These three calendars are used by the villagers in different circumstances. The Coptic Calendar is the oldest in use, followed by the Hijri or lunar one, whilst the European has been adopted in Egypt since 1875. While the Coptic Calendar, based on the solar system, is mainly used to regulate and co-ordinate the agricultural activities, the Hijri Calendar, based on the lunar system, fixes the religious and ceremonial feasts; the European is mainly used for activities connected either with legal procedures or other official business. More often than not, especially with the older generation, the European dates are changed into either the Coptic or lunar dates.[2]

The methods and implements of work are more or less the same traditional ones known to have been used by the Egyptian farmer for thousands of years. The 'touriah' or the 'fass' is the indispensable implement to any farmer. It is a kind of hoe which can be turned to many uses, such as breaking up clods of earth, digging furrows, scraping fertilizer clay from the hills, and so forth. For ploughing, he uses the Egyptian plough called 'mihrat', dragged by one or two yoked cows. The water-wheel and the 'shadoof' are used at present only for irrigating the small parcels of land which are higher than the water level in the canals. Such plots of land are very few, compared with large areas which are easily irrigated by merely opening the runnel between the field and the canal, which is filled by the water raised by the pumping machine. The farmer also uses the 'garraffa', which is a beam of wood or a trunk of a palm-tree, to level down land after breaking up the clods with the hoe.[3]

In these methods of work, farm labour is extensive rather than intensive. Work is spread over almost the whole year. Of course, every farmer knows that more effort and concentration are called for in the two periods, that of preparing the soil and sowing of the seeds, and that of harvesting. Again, the gathering of fertilizer and manure is an equally important and arduous task, though more spread out during the period of two or four months for

[1] The Hijri Calendar starts with the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in A.D 622.

[2] See Appendix II for a note on the use of lunar and Coptic months in the village with the agricultural and religious activities connected with them.

[3] For methods and implements of farm work in Egypt see Henry Habib-Ayrout, *The Fellaheen*, Chapter IV, Cairo (n.d.).

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

862 It was mentioned earlier that food is considered almost sacred and it
264 was shown how this attitude towards it was instilled into the children. They call bread 'baraka' and swear by it.[1] Moreover, it is worth noting that while the children talk of, and display food freely, and have no shame about eating anywhere, adults are quite secretive and scrupulous about their food. The latter are wary of being exposed to the eye of a stranger while they are eating; they feel that if they do not ask the stranger to join them in the meal, he might have a bad effect on what they are eating. It is the custom to insist on any unexpected person joining them in eating even for one bite by saying, 'Come and say "In the Name of God".' The invited person in this case usually expresses his willingness to have a bite with the others to still any fear or suspicion, or says that he has just eaten, 'Thanks to God'. Food carried from the house to the guest house is usually covered, not necessarily for hygienic purposes, but for the fear of being 'breathed in' by onlookers. This secretive attitude towards food is usually inculcated into the children when they are old enough to be able to know when to stop eating or postpone it, if a visitor suddenly comes to the house. It is not surprising to find food as one of the major interests in children's lives in a community which divides the year into the seasons of richness
[805] and plenty, referring to the times immediately after the harvest, while those times preceding it are called seasons of hunger.

852 The greatest experience that the child undergoes during childhood is
304 circumcision. The boy is usually circumcised between the ages of three and six, and his circumcision is accompanied by a ceremony which is justified on religious grounds. The adult public celebration of the occasion consists of communal feasting of all the male relatives and friends invited on the evening previous to the evening of the rite, while the female relatives partake of a meal in the house. In the case of a girl's circumcision, the celebration is confined purely to women, and no man, not even the father, is expected to participate, or to show an interest in it.

Before the actual celebrations of the ceremony, the boy who is to be circumcised is taken round the village with a group of his age-mates and older boys, inviting relatives and friends in their houses to join the celebration of the occasion. Sometimes the invitation is oral, and sometimes by handing over a written invitation.

The day of circumcision arrives, and as expected during the evening
[264] communal meal, boys would be eating from separate trays apart from the adults, while some of them would be serving the rest of the guests by fetching more bread, or more vegetables, and washing hands before and after the meal, while an adult would be chosen to distribute the meat from a common dish. The meal would end with the reading of 'Fatiha' to render the event successful, and expressed hope that the guests might one day attend the child's marriage ceremony, and blessings invoked for the parents and the family. The meal would be followed by reciting parts from the

[1] See Chapter I.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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used. The pens are made out of maize stalks, the end being sharpened to a point by a razor. This point is then divided in the middle.

After the tablets have been dried in the sun the time for writing the new assignment comes. Monitors gather the boys around them and dictate to them, either from memory or from a copy of the Koran, what they should write. The monitor dictates to each of his pupils in turn, a sentence at a time, and so comes back to the first one, and this continues until the dictation is finished. Some of the beginners do actually use the tablets for writing without actually knowing how to write, although they might be able to recite the alphabet. What really happens is that the monitor manipulates the hand of his pupil on the tablet, or he may write the lines with his fingernail on the tablet, asking the young boy to trace his writing with the pen. He then asks each of the boys to read back to him what he has written. After this the monitors themselves start writing their assignment, which they should read to the Sheikh seated at his feet.

All this takes place in the morning (until about ten o'clock), after which the children are allowed an interval for breakfast. They go home for this and return after a short time to resume the second working period, which lasts until noon, and during which the boys will be reading their written assignment under the supervision of the monitors.[1] Sitting facing the walls, with their tablets in front of them, the boys will be reciting aloud their set texts and swaying their heads and bodies forwards and backwards. The babble and din of the Kuttab is the sure sign for the Sheikh that it is busy and hard-working, for immediately the din dies down, the Sheikh will incite his boys to raise their voices and get on with their work. If the boys persist in any disobedience, the Sheikh would use his stick, laying about him without exception, hitting their backs, whereupon their voices would rise and go again at full pitch. This repetition continues until noon, when the Sheikh claps his hands, letting the boys go for their lunch.

After the lunch recess the boys return to the Kuttab, each carrying a loaf of bread for the Sheikh. This has been selected by the mother as one of her best-baked loaves. Some children do not take loaves with them, but, as a result of an agreement between the Sheikh and the father, the former receives a stipulated amount of corn at the end of each harvest. The loaf, however, is a token of the teacher's work, and ideally, he who teaches the Holy Book is not expected to ask for a remuneration. In fact, the Sheikh receives in addition to the daily loaf certain gifts on various occasions, such as when the boy finishes his alphabet and begins to write the first chapter of the Koran, at the end of each section (juza) and so on. He also receives a white garment, in addition to other gifts, when the boy finishes the whole of the Koran.

The first part of the afternoon work in the Kuttab is taken up with

[1] The time in the Kuttab is not regulated by the hour, but is usually fixed either by the noisy arrival or departure of a train, or according to the shadow cast by the sun from the wall, or a boy's shadow.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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Appendix Two

THE COPTIC AND THE LUNAR CALENDAR

ACCORDING to the Coptic Calendar the year is divided into twelve months of thirty days each, with the addition of five inter-calary days at the end of three successive years and six at the end of the fourth, and these days are called 'nasee' (prolongation).[1] As this calendar indicates the position of the earth in its orbit, it corresponds to the seasonal climatic changes around which farm work generally revolves. Though very

Coptic Calendar	*Corresponding European dates*	*Lunar Calendar (Higri). These months fall some eleven days earlier every solar year*
Toot	10th or 11th September[2]	Muharram
Babah	10th or 11th October	Safar
Hatoor	9th or 10th November	Rabi Awwal
Kiyahk (kiyah)	9th or 10th December	Rabi Tani
Toobah	8th or 9th January	Jamad Awwal
Amsheer	7th or 8th February	Jamad Tani
Baramhat	9th March	Rajab
Baramoudah	8th April	Shaaban
Bashans	8th May	Ramadan
Baoonah	7th June	Shawwal
Abeeb	7th July	Zul Ka'dda
Misri	6th August	Zul Hijjah

[1] Some of the Coptic Calendar months are certainly derived from names of ancient Egyptian deities, and this may be taken to indicate that this Calendar is older than the Coptic Church which still uses it to regulate its ecclesiastical year. The Coptic calendar starts from the year A.D. 284, the first year of the Roman Emperor Diocletian's reign, who persecuted the Christians in Egypt, and in commemoration of this event the Coptic Church adopted this year called 'The Year of the Martyrs' as the starting point for its calendar.

[2] Toot 1st begins on 11th September next to a Coptic leap year, or, when in the European Calendar, the following year is a leap year.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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few city-dwellers, as most of the products of the modern schools, are seldom acquainted with the names of these months, their functional importance is obvious to the greater part of the Egyptian rural population.

For the village boys, the memorizing of these month-names is greatly helped by the descriptive rhyming phrases that connect them with such significant climatic changes or agricultural events. The table opposite shows the Coptic months and the corresponding dates of the European calendar, as well as the Lunar calendar.

The following are the rhyming phrases connected with the Coptic months. It is to be noticed that they are connected either with the climatic conditions or with wheat in winter, or a kind of millet (different from the one grown after perennial irrigation was introduced) called 'damiri' and which used to be grown in autumn, lasting for two months.

Toot:
He is a fool who expects flood in Toot.

Babah:
If the millet's cob is not fully ripe in this month, not much harvest is to be expected.

Hatoor:
Hatoor calls the cold to commence.

Kiyah:
Compels the barking dog to sleep.[1]

Toobah:
In Toobah my ankle has never been wetted by water.[2]

Amsheer:
The first ten of Amsheer makes one's skin shiver (chopped).

Baramhat:
One can enter the field and get corn (corn begins to ripen).

Baramoudah:
The corn is gathered into heaps.

Bashans:
The chaff is taken away from the sun (loaded home).

Baoonah:
Full of hardship, and it is not advisable to eat eggs or fish (due probably to the excessive heat).

Abeeb:
One does not find it difficult to get dates.

Misri:
Between Misri and Abeeb, send they joy-cries, O beloved (the peak of the Nile flood). This applies, of course, to the days of the basin irrigation,

[1] One of the boys added that in Kiyah the sleeping dog brings his head nearer to his tail.
[2] This is the period of drought called 'gafaf' during which the government allows no water to remain in the canals so that they may be cleaned out; thus water is not available for irrigation.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX II

when the land used to be flooded with the water of the Nile during this period.[1]

Thus these phrases connected with the Coptic months contain some of the community's wisdom related to its technical activities, food consumption and indications of weather changes. It is worth noting that while there are no fixed dates in the Coptic Calendar for any specific agricultural activities, the latter are carried out within a certain time-limit, such as the beginning of a month or second week in a month or towards the end or before beginning of such and such a month, and so forth.

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241

The following is a seasonal calendar for the various types of farm work as regulated by the Coptic Calendar.

Coptic Months	*Agricultural Activities*
Toot	*The Winter Crop (Shitwi)* Either fallow land or early harvested millet: during the first ten days of the month land is sown with clover (berseem).
Babah	Sowing of wheat and barley (during the first ten days). First irrigation of beans and clover.
Hatoor	First irrigation of wheat and barley called 'cleaning irrigation'. Cutting clover before irrigation. Irrigation of beans.
Kiyah	Second irrigation of wheat and barley after distributing fertilizer. Cutting of clover for the second time.[1] Irrigation of beans and clover.
Toobah	Third irrigation of wheat, with fertilizer only for the weak section. Third irrigation of barley. Third cutting of clover. Irrigation of clover and beans.

[1] Clover is cut four times, at intervals of thirty days.

At the season called the *gaffaf*, in January [21], double gangs are to be seen working with their hands, one on the bank, the other down in the canal bed. Those below pull up the clods of mud and weeds and throw them to those on the bank, who catch them and fling them yet further aside.

In order that this canal system may do its work and the water reach the field, the fellah has to make a network of runnels which will bring the water to his crops. He is ceaselessly occupied in cleaning and maintaining these smaller channels.

When the turn comes for his field to receive its water—five days out of ten in flood time, and six days out of eighteen at low Nile — the fellah stays up night after night in order to lose none of his water ration.

When the water level is high he watches it flow through the channels, and has only to clear away any obstacles. But the water is at low level for 50 to 200 days a year, according to the different regions, and then he has to raise it by hand. Here again he has no modern machinery, but uses the simplest apparatus, as old as the history of Egypt.

When the water level is only about two feet below his field, he has two ways of raising it to the thirsty soil. The first way has now become almost obsolete.

FIRST METHOD

Two men stand face to face on a ledge cut in the bank at water level. With four hempen or palm-fibre ropes they support a wide shallow vessel about 18 ins. in diameter and 10 ins. deep. It is usually made of light basket-work and more or less waterproof.

Their first movement is to bend slightly down, turning towards the water, then dip their basket and fill it. With a second movement they straighten themselves, turn to the field, and, raising the vessel by a simultaneous movement of their forearms, empty it out into the mouth of the irrigation channel.

This work, which is performed with clockwork regularity, brings into play mainly the muscles of the trunk and the arms. It is very fatiguing and the strongest men cannot bear it for more than three hours at a time. Accordingly two pairs work turn and turn about.

241 This 'leaven of the land' has still to be put to the soil.
242 Twenty times a day the donkey, laden with great panniers
292 or sacks and driven by the fellah's son, carries the manure
293 to the field and goes back to reload. There are no carts or barrows for this work, and the distances are often great. The farmer lays down the manure generously, whether it be natural humus or chemical fertiliser, and packs it by hand round the plant to be encouraged.

Getting in the Crops

All this attention is paid to the soil in order that it may yield its fruits. It follows that the fellah's work must continue from seed-time till harvest. The days are gone when he could go away after sowing and return in a few months' time to gather the crop. The struggle for life has become continuous and unrelenting. Since the introduction of cotton and the establishment of perennial irrigation, the fellah has no slack season and is always tending some crop or other.

The crops follow a system of rotation covering a period of two or three years. Taking cotton first, the succession will be as follows:

February-October	Cotton
November-May	Wheat, berseem or barley
May-June	(Partly fallow)
June-November	Maize or rice
December-February	Berseem
April-October	Cotton
November-May	Winter cereals or berseem
May-November	Maize (or fallow)
November-March	Berseem or winter cereals
March-June	(Partly fallow)
June-October	Maize or rice
November-March	Berseem

This calendar of crop rotation is observed with but little variation everywhere in the country, according to the need and experience of the farmer. I have translated it into Gregorian months; but the fellaheen keep to the Coptic Calendar, which is based on the Nile flood and goes back to ancient times. It begins with the month of *Tût* (September), in which the Nile reaches its highest level, and divides the solar year into twelve months. There is a series of Arabic [538] proverbs deriving originally from Pharaonic Egypt, which

assign to each month its proper task. Wheat, which at that time was the main crop, is frequently mentioned, but the new-fangled cotton not at all [24].

This same calendar also regulates the Coptic ecclesiastical year, for when Christianity came to Egypt it made no change in the existing customs. The reckoning begins from A.D. 284, the first year of Diocletian's reign, called 'The Year of the Martyrs'. In actual fact, the great persecutions took place in A.D. 304.

Moslems, on the other hand, start from the *hegira*, or Flight of the Prophet (622 A.D.), and count in lunar months.

Since 1875, Egypt has officially employed the Gregorian Calendar, which is gradually penetrating everywhere. The Government has not kept the ancient Egyptian names for the months, nor has it translated the Roman names. It has simply taken over their popular adaptations as follows: - *yanayer, febrayer, mâris, abrîl, myo, yûnyo, yûlyo, oghostos* and so on. The Ministry of Agriculture works by this calendar to the exclusion of the other two, and so, if not actually used by all the fellaheen, it is understood by most of them.

At this point it will be convenient to describe the principal crops of contemporary Egypt, which are also those at which most of the fellaheen work, namely cotton, which is the main source of the country's wealth; maize and wheat, which provide its daily bread; and *berseem*, the fodder of its cattle. Of the rest we shall say only a word or two in passing.

A. THE "GARDENING" OF THE COTTON PLANT

Cotton was not unknown to the Ancient Egyptians. Some fabrics of Pharaonic times seem to be woven of cotton thread, and Pliny mentions its use. Its development in Egypt for industrial purposes took place in the mid-nineteenth century after the experiments of Jumel. Perennial irrigation, introduced about the same time, together with the increase of the population, and the advantageous openings on the English market, very soon made cotton the principal crop of the country. The world crisis of 1930, which led to a slump in cotton, forced the Egyptian Government to restrict it to a quarter of the total cultivated area. Despite

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

21. The GAFFAR is a period of artificial dryness, occurring as a rule in January and lasting forty days, during which the Government allows no water to remain in the canals, so as to allow them to be cleaned by special gangs at State expense. At the same season, since the crops have little need of water, opportunity is taken to fill the reservoirs, such as those of Aswan and Gebel Awliya. 113 [312 805]

The true low-water period, however, comes in April—June, when the Nile is naturally very low and the daily flow is at its minimum.

22. Hartman ; L'AGRICULTURE DANS L'ANCIENNE EGYPTE, p. 119.

23. G. Legrain ; LOUQSOR SOUS LES PHARAONS : Légendes et chansons populaires de la Haute-Egypte ; Vromant, Brussels, 1914, p. 171.

24. (*T*) See also : M.G. Maspero ; CHANSONS POPULAIRES RECUEILLIES DANS LA HAUTE-EGYPTE. N. G. Mavris ; CONTRIBUTION À L'ETUDE DE LA CHANSON POPULAIRE ÉGYPTIENNE.

24. M. Tissot ; ETUDE SUR LE CALENDRIER COPTE ET SES EPHÉMÉRIDES, Mourès, Alexandrie, 1867.

DEVISES QUI ACCOMPAGNENT LES NOMS DES MOIS COPTES DANS LE LANGAGE POPULAIRE ARABE EN EGYPTE, by Y. Artin Pasha, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE 1891, pp. 250-267.

25. According to a study by Ibnet ish-Saty' ('Aisha 'Abdur-Rahman) published in AL-AHRAM for the 17th, 18th, and 19th February 1937 there were 25,000 children between 8 and 15 years of age employed in that year in this unhealthy labour. Their day began at 5 a.m. and lasted without any definite interval until 9 p.m. There are in Egypt about a hundred such factories preparing cotton for export, in which the fellaheen work under deplorable conditions. "During his recent tour in Gharbiya H.M. King Farouk visited the TEFTEESH (estate) of Sakka, belonging to the State Domains.... In the room where the cotton bales were being pressed His Majesty observed that the pressing with hands and feet was extraordinarily fatiguing to the fellaheen, 113 464 857

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

he had made up his mind to travel on the morrow to the Nile Valley. Then my heart was aflutter at this news, and I begged him to delay his journey until after the morrow, until I had given him my cash to double. He demurred a little, then after my much pleading, he consented at last. So I handed him all my wealth, the profits of fifteen years, four hundred pounds. He took it and disappeared, and did not return from that time."

LI

THE SHE-MULE OF THE THRONE OR OF THE TENTH (BAGHLAT-AL-'ARSH AU AL-'ASHR)

THERE is nothing more extraordinary than this nonsense. They say that on the night of the twenty-seventh of the month Rajab, or according to others on the night of the *tenth* of the month Muharram,[1] as can be gathered from its name, there is to be seen a black she-mule which goes round all the cultivated districts, with a saddle-bag full of gold on her back, and, above the saddle-bag, the head [p. 101] of a slave severed from its trunk. They say that whoever chances upon her, must take what goods are in the saddle-bag and place instead barley for the mule. For this reason the silly ones amongst the country folk spend all their nights awake on the look out for the foot-prints of the she-mule.

An old man of advanced age (one of those who still trust in this error but who told his story after the manner of a jest) said to me: I was sitting along with three of my companions at the house of a friend of ours in the middle of the road, on the night appointed for the passing of the mule. (It is said that she passes along the best path.) We determined upon spending the whole night in watching. When we were in the last third

[1] [The tenth day of al-Muharram, the first month of the Moslem year, has a sacred significance amongst the faithful. It is the *'Ashūrā*, or voluntary fast day observed by the *sunnis*, or orthodox Moslems, while on the same day the *shi'as*, or sectarians of Islam, commemorate the fatal conflict at Kerbela, when the Prophet's grandson Husain was killed (in A.D. 680).]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

23.

Enough of Play!

×539
861 The mothers have difficulty every evening, in inducing the children, who play in the streets until late in the evening, to come home to supper.

A child who is sent out to get the others, speaks:

Ya lāʿibin kull el-lēle,
iṭʿaššu u-taʿālu!
Win mā gētūš il-lēle,
laḥaddifkum bi-ʾul'ēle,
simm el-fār
miʿ el-ʿaṭṭār.
[Iḫbaṭ ya ṭār
kull el-lēle!]

You, who play all night,
Come and have your supper!
And if you do not come this evening,
I shall throw a clod at you!
Mouse-poison
Is (to be had) at the grocer's!
[534] [Beat, tambourine,
The whole night through].

[805] 1. Night begins at sunset. Lēle, "night", often designates, therefore, our evening.
5. 6 I might poison you!
7. 8 May have been taken from some other song.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

33.

×539 805 461 [422] [405] For the peasant, the possession of a watch is an unheard-of luxury. He can reckon the time of day by the position of the sun, accurately enough for his purposes. There lies (compare also No. 27) in the mention of the watches, a slight reproach: It should never happen to you to run over time. For what purpose do you have watches?

Ya-lli ma'akum is-sā'āt,
ādí mī'ād 'afa-lla fāt!

Ye, who have watches,
Look, it is already past time for quitting work!

34.

×539 461 To appreciate this call, one must have stood, one's self, in the dust of an excavating field.

Ya sīdi, 'afa-lla, nāna!
we-bṭilna weš-šuṛl 'ammāna.

O Sir, let the working-time be over, it is enough!
We are "finished" and the work has made us blind.

2. "We are finished": we have come to the end of our strength.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

45.

×539 As in the preceding song, the person addressed, is the caravan-driver.

Istanne telât daragât,
lamma awadda' rufa'âti
wa'ul-luhum:
'azzam Allah agrukum fiye!

Wait three degrees,
That I may take leave of my companions
And say to them:
576 "May Allah bless you richly for all that ye have done for me!"

1. Three degrees on the primitive sun-dial, which is made by thrusting a stick into the ground. According to it, the periods of work at the shâdûf are regulated.

[405]
[805]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

107.

Persuasion.

The girl comes to her lover, named Abu Mūsa, who is busy at the sāqye (compare No. 97), to fetch him from his work. "Thou wilt find work at home to do, and there thou wilt be near me, and there will be time, too, for something else beside work."

Yabu Mūsa, ḥill et-tōr!
Walla, māna ḥāllo,
lamma maiyil ḍillo.
Ḍillo maiyil u-rāḥ,
wa-la ba'āš illa-l-mirwāḥ,
ṣaffē banāni, ṣaff ilwaḥ,
ṣaff il-ḥōḥ 'ala-t-tiffāḥ!
Ta'āle, ya ḥabībi, wišwešni;
aḥsan rāḥ teṛb we-tūḥašni.

"Abu Mūsa, untie the bull!"
"By Allah! I will not untie him
Until his shadow has grown long."
"But his shadow has already grown long and gone away,
And there is nothing left to do but to go

119.

The Door and the Lover.

Ya bāb, ʾul-li ʿala auwil meṣāḥibetak, 539x
ya bāb, ʾalbi inšabak miʿ ḥubbê ṣāḥibetak, 832
ya bāb, ana kuntê gāi-lak maʿ ṣiyaḥ ed-dīk, 342
ya bāb, ana kuntê nāwi aḫlaʿak warmīk,
ya bāb, ana kuntê nāwi aḫlaʿak, sibtak.
Ma ʾal-li-l-bāb: Ḥalli el-ʿaʾl sākin fik,
wiš yiʿmil el-bāb, lamma ṣaḥbo gāfik?
Ma ultê: Ya bāb, gāk ḫafsê bi-muftāḥak,
ʿiyān ḥabībi terāi min bēn ilwāḥak.
Ma ʾal-li-l-bāb: Wana mā-li taʿtibni,
wiš yiʿmil el-bāb, lamma ṣāḥibo zāḥak?
Ma ʾultê: Ya bāb, dana ḍaiyaḥtê ʿalê māli,
u-lē ma ʾābilt el-gamūl badri u-hu-māli,
ʾul-lo, ḫallī yūfi il-miʿād!
Illi ʿalê siʾān ṣauwamni ʿan akl ez-zād.
ʾasamēn u-billāh, we-ṣōm el-ʿām yilzamni,
in ma-ḥtaḍā-li-b-uaṣlo lasakkano il-alḥād!

"O door, tell me for thy former friendship's sake!
O door, my heart is entangled in love for thy mistress.
O door, I was on the way to thee before the cock crowed. [805] [825]
O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges and throw thee on the ground.
O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges, but I have left thee."
What the door said to me: "Let reason dwell in thee!

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796 the people begin to be in an active and excited state. Numerous groups collect in the open spaces and scan the
[821] western horizon to see if they can discover the new moon; since it is only on the testimony of a Moslim that he has seen the new moon—though he may be a man of no account whatever—that the festival can begin. Even the most accurate astronomical calculation, so far as this is possible, has not the same authority. The rising and setting of the new as well as of the full moon are not regulated exactly by those of the sun, since the synodic or lunar month contains 29 days, 12 hours, and 44 minutes, and the time of conjunction, when moon, earth, and sun are in a right line, happens at very different hours of the day in different months. The time at which the new moon, so eagerly looked for by the Mohammedans, first reappears after astronomical new-moon also depends upon the season of the year; it is seen earliest in the spring months, for reasons depending upon the position of the moon's path relatively to that of the sun. An astronomer says that he has not seen the moon earlier than forty hours after nor later than twenty-seven hours before the astronomical new-moon, but that by a combination of all favourable circumstances this may even happen within twenty-four hours, and travellers maintain that they have seen the old moon on the morning and the new moon on the evening of the same day. To these considerations one is led who every year looks on, while the Moslimin thus eagerly and for the most part uselessly watch the heavens. Since the official calendar pays no attention to this important
• [805] method of determining Ramadan, it simply gives, now to one month, now to another, thirty or twenty-nine days in order to make up the total of 354. Accordingly, when the first of Ramadan occurs in the calendar, it is by no means certain whether at the same time the new moon is visible. The more scientific among the heads of the province often actually cause the fast to be altered a day till the moon is perfectly visible in the evening sky. When Ramadan falls in winter, at which season the sky is often clouded, and in high latitudes, where it is gloomy for weeks at a time, the determina-

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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusára*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesîm*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent